

wrong. We can provide lethal defensive weapons to help the Ukrainians defend their own homeland, their own country, from this Russian invasion. I think we should, and I encourage the administration to move forward. I have reached the conclusion we eventually have to deal with this bully with force. Force must be met with force. We must give the Ukrainian people the means to defend themselves and to build a modern democratic nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

REMEMBERING KAYLA JEAN MUELLER

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise today to mourn the tragic death of 26-year-old humanitarian aid worker Kayla Jean Mueller of Prescott, AZ, who had been held by ISIL terrorists in Syria since August of 2013.

I am heartbroken for the Mueller family at the loss of their beautiful, beloved Kayla. The thoughts and prayers of the people of her home State of Arizona, our country, and the civilized world are with the Mueller family at this terrible hour.

I want to take the time today to share a bit of Kayla's story. This wonderful young woman represented the best of us. She had a remarkable impact on the lives of so many people who never had the honor of meeting her, and her story will forever be an inspiration to us.

Kayla attended high school at Tri-City College Prep in Prescott, AZ, where she was recognized as a National Young Leader and received the President's Award For Academic Excellence in 2007, the Yavapai County Community Foundation Youth Philanthropist of the Year Award in 2005, and the Gold Presidential Volunteer Award in 2007 for her volunteer efforts with Youth Count, AmeriCorps, America's Promise, Open Inn for troubled youth, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and other organizations.

After graduating from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff in 2009, Kayla committed her life to helping people in need around the world—first in India, then Israel, the Palestinian territories, and back home in Prescott where she volunteered at an HIV-AIDS clinic, and a women's shelter. But it was the conflict in Syria that drew Kayla's greatest interest and, again, sparked her desire to help those in need. In a YouTube video she made in October 2011, as the Syrian civil war was just beginning, Kayla said:

I am in solidarity with the Syrian people. I reject the brutality and killing that the Syrian authorities are committing against the Syrian people. Because silence is participation in this crime, I declare my participation in the Syrian sit-in on YouTube.

In December 2012, Kayla traveled to the Turkish-Syrian border where she worked for months helping the thousands of Syrian refugees whose lives

were torn apart by the humanitarian catastrophe created by Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian civil war.

According to her family, Kayla found this work heartbreaking but compelling. She was extremely devoted to the people of Syria and their struggle. Kayla explained to her family her call to service this way. She said:

I find God in the suffering eyes reflected in mine. If this is how you are revealed to me, this is how I will forever seek you. I will always seek God. Some people find God in church. Some people find God in nature. Some people find God in love; I find God in suffering. I've known for some time what my life's work is, using my hands as tools to relieve suffering.

When Kayla traveled back home to visit her family in Arizona in May of 2013, she spoke about her experiences at the Prescott Kiwanis Club where her father was a member. After recalling helping a Syrian man, whose wife had been murdered, to reunite with a 6-year-old relative he was desperately searching for after their refugee camp was bombed, Kayla said:

This story is not rare in Syria. This is the reality for Syrians two and a half years on. When Syrians hear I'm an American, they ask, "Where is the world?" All I can do is cry with them, because I don't know.

After spending time with the refugees, Kayla told the Kiwanis Club she was totally drawn in, and that she "can't do enough" to help. She recalled stories of children being hurt by unexploded bombs, women forced into early marriages, elementary schools targeted for bombing by the Syrian regime, and people living in caves to escape the bombing.

Kayla went on. She said:

Syrians are dying by the thousands, and they're fighting just to talk about the rights we have. . . . For as long as I live, I will not let this suffering be normal. [I will not let this be] something we just accept. It's important to stop and realize what we have, why we have it and how privileged we are. And from that place, start caring and get a lot done.

She described part of her work helping the Syrian children in the refugee camps—including drawing, painting, and playing with the children, many of whom were badly scarred physically and psychologically by the war.

She said:

We give and get joy from playing with these children. Half the 1.5 million refugees the U.N. has registered are children. In the chaos of waking up in the middle of the night and being shelled, we're hearing of more children being separated from their families by accident.

Asked by Kiwanis members what her recommendations for addressing the conflict were, Kayla said, "A no-fly zone over refugee camps would be number one."

Kayla also believed if the terrible reality of the conflict were better known to Americans, our Nation would be more heavily engaged. "The people of the United States would see that something needs to be done," she said.

Today the Mueller family released a letter written to them by Kayla in the

spring of 2014. I want to read a bit of it to give a sense of this young woman, her deep faith in God, her profound love for her family, and her remarkable strength in the face of grave danger.

She wrote: I remember mom always telling me that all in all, in the end the only one you really have is God. I have come to a place in experience where, in every sense of the word, I have surrendered myself to our Creator because literally there was no one else. By God and by your prayers, I have felt tenderly cradled in free fall. I have been shown in darkness and light and have learned that even in prison one can be free. I am grateful. I have to see that there is good in every situation; sometimes we just have to look for it. I pray each day that, if nothing else, you have felt a certain closeness and surrender to God as well and have formed a bond of love and support amongst one another. I miss you all as if it had been a decade of forced separation.

Kayla closed with these words: The thought of your pain is the source of my own. Simultaneously, the hope of our reunion is the source of my strength. Please be patient. Give your pain to God. I know you would want me to remain strong. That is exactly what I am doing. Do not fear for me; continue to pray, as will I. By God's will we will be together soon. All my everything, Kayla.

In a statement today, the Mueller family reflected on Kayla's life and their commitment to work every day to honor her legacy:

Kayla was a compassionate and devoted humanitarian. She dedicated the whole of her young life to helping those in need of freedom, justice and peace. Kayla was drawn to help those displaced by the Syrian civil war. She first traveled to Turkey in December 2012 to provide humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees. She told us of the great joy she took in helping Syrian children and their families. We are so proud of the person Kayla was and the work she did while she was here with us. She lived with purpose and we will work every day to honor her legacy. Our hearts are breaking for our only daughter, but we will continue on in peace, dignity and love for her.

On behalf of the people of Arizona and the Congress of the United States, I express our deepest condolences to Kayla's parents, Marsha and Carl Mueller, her loving family, and many friends. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Kayla devoted her young life to helping people in need around the world, to healing the sick, and bringing light to some of the darkest and most desperate places on Earth. She will never be forgotten.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter written by Kayla during her imprisonment to her family be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Everyone, If you are receiving this letter it means I am still detained but my cell mates (starting from 11/2/2014) have been released. I have asked them to contact you + send you this letter. It's hard to know what to say.

Please know that I am in a safe location, completely unharmed + healthy (put on weight in fact); I have been treated w/ the utmost respect + kindness. I wanted to write you all a well thought out letter (but I didn't know if my cell mates would be leaving in the coming days or the coming months restricting my time but primarily) I could only but write the letter a paragraph at a time, just the thought of you all sends me into a fit of tears. If you could say I have "suffered" at all throughout this whole experience it is only in knowing how much suffering I have put you all through; I will never ask you to forgive me as I do not deserve forgiveness. I remember mom always telling me that all in all in the end the only one you really have is God. I have come to a place in experience where, in every sense of the word, I have surrendered myself to our creator b/c literally there was no else . . . + by God + by your prayers I have felt tenderly cradled in freefall. I have been shown in darkness, light + have learned that even in prison, one can be free. I am grateful. I have come to see that there is good in every situation, sometimes we just have to look for it. I pray each each day that if nothing else, you have felt a certain closeness + surrender to God as well + have formed a bond of love + support amongst one another . . . I miss you all as if it has been a decade of forced separation. I have had many a long hour to think, to think of all the things I will do w/ Lex, our first family camping trip, the first meeting @ the airport. I have had many hours to think how only in your absence have I finally @ 25 years old come to realize your place in my life. The gift that is each one of you + the person I could + could not be if you were not a part of my life, my family, my support. I DO NOT want the negotiations for my release to be your duty, if there is any other option take it, even if it takes more time. This should never have become your burden. I have asked these women to support you; please seek their advice. If you have not done so already, [REDACTED] can contact [REDACTED] who may have a certain level of experience with these people. None of us could have known it would be this long but know I am also fighting from my side in the ways I am able + I have a lot of fight left inside of me. I am not breaking down + I will not give in no matter how long it takes. I wrote a song some months ago that says, "The part of me that pains the most also gets me out of bed, w/out your hope there would be nothing left . . ." aka—The thought of your pain is the source of my own, simultaneously the hope of our reunion is the source of my strength. Please be patient, give your pain to God. I know you would want me to remain strong. That is exactly what I am doing. Do not fear for me, continue to pray as will I + by God's will we will be together soon.

All my everything,

KAYLA.

Mr. MCCAIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, can the Chair tell me what the status of the floor is and how much time I have to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business with 20-minute grants.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I thank the Chair.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, despite the fact that we are just days away from the Department of Homeland Security shutting down, we don't yet have an agreement to fund a clean bill to keep the Department of Homeland Security operating. Unfortunately, we haven't heard from the majority that there is interest in addressing this issue this week. I think that is very unfortunate.

We are ready to work to pass a clean full-year bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security, and last week we actually asked unanimous consent to take up and pass the clean bill that Senator MIKULSKI and I introduced to fund the Department for the rest of the year and to then have votes on immigration matters. I think we are happy to debate immigration, but we don't believe we should do it on the bill that would fund the Department of Homeland Security. Unfortunately, that unanimous consent was rejected.

Now, we could pass a clean bill this afternoon, and we should. We should stop playing politics with our national security. In just a few days, with our Nation dealing with real and dangerous terror threats, some Members of Congress have suggested we should shut down the Department of Homeland Security. Because of their extreme opposition to the President's Executive actions on immigration, they are willing to put at risk the security and safety of this country. So I have come to the floor today to talk about why we need to put politics aside for the security of our Nation and why we need to pass a full-year funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

A short-term budget, which is what some Members of Congress are discussing, should be off the table. A short-term budget, a continuing resolution, or a CR, means the government is on autopilot, and that is extraordinarily bad for business and for security. We need to pass a full-year bill.

If the Department of Homeland Security operates under a short-term budget, grants to protect our cities and our Nation's ports from terror attacks would be halted, grants to police and firefighters won't be awarded, contracts and acquisitions would be postponed, hiring would be delayed, and employee training would be scaled back.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson recently said:

As long as this Department continues to operate on a CR, we are prevented from funding key homeland security initiatives. These include funding for new grants to state and local law enforcement, additional border security resources, and additional Secret Service resources. Other core missions, such as aviation security and protection of federal installations and personnel, are also hampered.

A little while ago, Senator BOOKER and I held a conference call with Mayor

Anisse Parker of Houston, TX, Mayor Michael Nutter of Philadelphia, and New York City Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counterterrorism John Miller. They talked about how very real and dangerous the consequences would be for cities if we don't fund Homeland Security. Our big cities and our major urban areas are unfortunately top targets for terrorists, and if we don't pass a full-year funding bill for DHS, a grant program specifically designed to help cities plan, prepare for, and defend against possible attacks will be halted.

One of the things that Deputy Commissioner Miller talked about is the fact that there have been 16 plots that have been thwarted against New York City, and that was done, to a great extent, by programs funded through the Department of Homeland Security. At risk is nearly \$600 million in funding to keep our cities safe that will be put on hold. Without those resources, cities and the millions who live there are at risk; and that is not to mention all of the other small communities around this country that are at risk. That is just unacceptable.

Now, Mayor Nutter, from Philadelphia, talked about how they are not able to train first responders because the funding is uncertain. They do not know if we are going to get a bill, and so they do not know if they can continue to train. He said they do not have reimbursement for their fusion centers if we don't get a funding bill for Homeland Security. He said: It is not right to put the heavy burden on those on the front lines, those first responders who are there in cases of emergency.

Mayor Parker from Houston talked about her employees at the police department, at the public health agency, and the Department of Homeland Security employees who are affected by our failure to get a funding bill. She said right now they are dealing with measles in the city of Houston, and it is very important they have public health workers who can go out and deal with that epidemic. Yet those health employees are going to be at risk if we don't get a clean funding bill. She also mentioned the three airports they operate and one of the busiest ports in the world, and those are at risk if we can't get a funding bill.

Our major commercial ports are also targets for terrorism attacks. If we don't pass a full-year funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security, the Port Security Grant Program will be put on hold, meaning nearly \$100 million won't be allocated to keep our ports safe throughout the Nation.

One of those programs where we will see a gap is in radiation detection. One of the things our investigators do, as they are looking at making sure our ports are secure, is to check for radiation, for nuclear materials that might be coming in to this country. Yet they won't have the instruments, the equipment they need to do that if we don't get a clean funding bill.